United Nations

Daily Highlights

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General, in Paris, holds talks with French President and Foreign Minister on possible United Nations peace-keeping operation in Bosnia-Herzegovina; prepared to send evaluation mission to the region to consider feasibility of such operation.

+ Secretary-General appoints Mohammed Sahnoun of Algeria as Special Representative for Somalia, effective today.

+ United Nations inspection team says most of Iraq's identified missile production equipment has been destroyed; Iraq can no longer produce ballistic missiles with a range greater than 150 kilometres at three of its major production sites.

+ Secretary-General expresses appreciation for important role played by German Foreign Minister Genscher, as the latter announces his intention to retire.

+ United Nations should encourage democratic elections by sending civilian observers, European Community Members tell Committee on Peace-keeping operations.

+ General Assembly President arrives in Beijing for meetings with Chinese Foreign Minister and other officials.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali stopped in Paris today on his way to New York for meetings with French President François Mitterrand and Foreign Minister Roland Dumas regarding a possible United Nations role in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

During their meeting, the Secretary-General and Foreign Minister Dumas had a tour d'horizon of the international situation, particularly in Yugoslavia and Afghanistan. The Secretary-General then held a meeting with

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President Mitterrand, during which they discussed Cambodia, Iraq, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Libya, Afghanistan, Somalia and the forthcoming Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in June.

In a statement issued at Headquarters, a United Nations spokeswoman said the Secretary-General had taken note of the French position regarding Bosnia-Herzegovina. He would be prepared to send an evaluation mission to look into the feasibility of a United Nations peace-keeping operation in Bosnia-Herzegovina. "It would not be productive for the United Nations to undertake such an operation without the means to do so or without a clear and viable mandate", she said.

The statement was issued at Headquarters in connection with remarks made by the Secretary-General to the press in Paris.

Tomorrow morning, before leaving for New York, the Secretary-General will meet with the French Minister of Health and Humanitarian Action, Bernard Kouchner, who has just returned from Bosnia-Herzegovina.

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The Secretary-General today announced the appointment of Mohammed Sahnoun of Algeria as Special Representative for Somalia, effective today.

The Security Council had welcomed, in its resolution 751 (1992) of Friday, 24 April, the Secretary-General's intention to appoint such a representative to provide overall direction of United Nations activities in Somalia and to assist him in his endeavours for a peaceful resolution of the conflict in that country.

Mr. Sahnoun has served as Algeria's Ambassador to Germany, France, the United States and Morocco. He was Chief of the Algerian Mission to the United Nations from 1982 to 1984.

Mr. Sahnoun is currently senior Adviser to the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED).

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Most of Iraq's identified missile production equipment has been destroyed, and Iraq can no longer produce ballistic missiles with a range greater than 150 kilometres at three of its major production sites, the Chief Inspector of a United Nations inspection team said yesterday.

Christopher Holland, who has returned to New York after leading the tenth inspection team in Iraq, said that most buildings and equipment identified by the Special Commission on Iraqi disarmament as having been involved in the production of ballistic missiles in Iraq have been destroyed.

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The team, which comprised seven experts from five countries, had supervised and verified the destruction of 45 items of production equipment and 10 buildings associated with Iraq's ballistic missiles programme.

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While in Paris today, the Secretary General spoke to German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher on the telephone in connection with Mr. Genscher's announced retirement. Mr. Boutros-Ghali expressed appreciation for the important role played by the German Foreign Minister in international relations. He also expressed the hope that Mr. Genscher will continue to play an active role in international relations and to support the United Nations in attaining its objectives.

The Secretary General's call came in the wake of Mr. Genscher's announcement yesterday that he intended to retire after 18 years as Minister of Foreign Affairs of his country.

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With the consent of the States concerned, the United Nations should encourage the holding of democratic elections by sending civilian observers, the representative of Portugal, speaking on behalf of the 12 member States of the European Community, told the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations yesterday as it began its general debate.

Fernando Reino of Portugal said that of the 12 ongoing peace-keeping operations, five had been established since the Committee met last year. Those operations made substantial demands on the United Nations and its Member States, he said. A series of practical measures enabling the Organization to cope effectively with its major undertakings was needed.

The representative of Germany referred to the constitutional reform process being undertaken in his country that would eventually enable it to participate in the military component of peace-keeping operations. The representative of Japan said there was a bill before his country's Diet designed to enable it to contribute personnel to peace-keeping operations.

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The President of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly, Samir S. Shihabi (Saudi Arabia), arrived in Beijing yesterday from Tokyo for meetings with Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen and other officials.

During the meetings, the Foreign Minister expressed his country's support for the United Nations. He said the current session of the General Assembly was an important one, taking place at a time of change.

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The Assembly President also met with Li Peng, Premier of the State Council, who told Mr. Shihabi that the Chinese people placed great hopes in the United Nations and looked to it to resolve difficulties. China fully supported the United Nations and a strengthened role for the General Assembly.

Tomorrow, Mr. Shihabi will pay a courtesy call on Yang Shangkun, the President of China.

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Correction: Please note that Jan Eliasson, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Coordinator for Emergency Relief is not the Coordinator for Humanitarian Assistance to Somalia, as erroneously stated in Thursday Highlights (23 April). The Secretary-General has appointed David Bassiouni as Coordinator for Somalia.

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